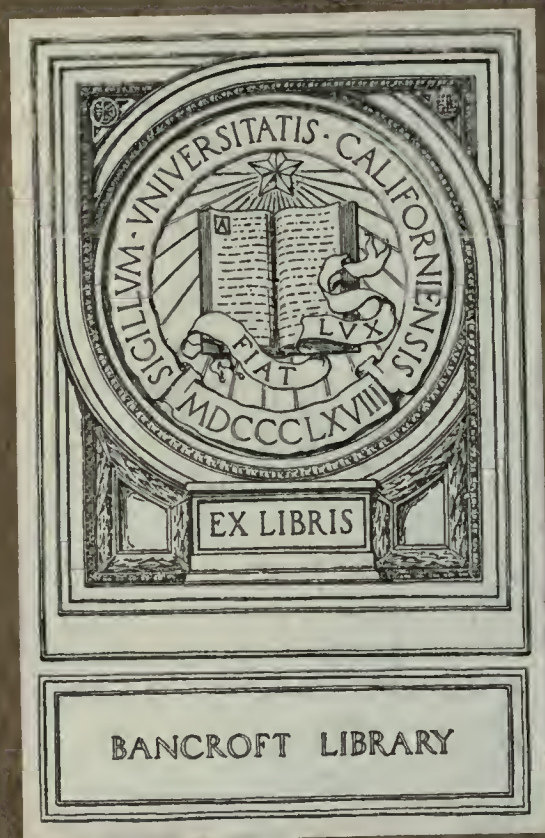


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# The Journal of American History



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# The Journal of American History

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JOSEPH SMITH  
Founder of the Church of the Latter Day Saints









JOSEPH SMITH, THE SECOND

He became President of the Reorganized Church of the Latter Day Saints in 1860.



FREDERICK MADISON SMITH  
President of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints









SIDNEY RIGDON



OLIVER COWDERY, DAVID WHITMER, AND MARTIN HARRIS, KNOWN AS THE  
THREE WITNESSES, AND THE HILL CUMORAH, NEAR PALMYRA, NEW YORK







WOODS NEAR PALMYRA, NEW YORK, WHERE THE FOLLOWERS OF JOSEPH SMITH BELIEVE HE SAW HIS FIRST VISION, IN 1820





TEMPLE LOT AND PUBLIC SQUARE AT FAR WEST, MISSOURI  
Where General Doniphan was ordered to execute the prisoners







NAUVOO TEMPLE

# History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

BY

HEMAN C. SMITH

Authorized Historian of the Reorganized Church of  
Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints; Editor of The  
Journal of History, Lamoni, Iowa; a Vice-President of  
The National Historical Society



THE FOLLOWING article presents a very interesting historical account of the dramatic events and perilous experiences connected with the early appearance of the Latter Day Saints successively in the States of New York, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa. It has been prepared by the official Historian of the Church organization with headquarters at Lamoni, and therefore gives an authoritative narration of its rise and development. Special interest appears in this account of the history and views of a people who very often have not been distinguished by the general public from the Latter Day Saints with headquarters at Salt Lake City.

The Editors of The Journal of American History consider this article an important study in the history of the Middle West of the United States, a considerable part of whose settlement was due to or connected with the pioneers of the Latter Day Saints. From this view-point, the record of their early difficulties and achievements, together with the statement of the convictions which influenced their settlement of the Middle West, possesses a decided value to all students of American history.

The Editors.





HIS ORGANIZATION had its origin April 6, 1830, at Fayette, Seneca County, New York. Its charter members were only six in number, *viz.*: Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, David Whitmer, Samuel H. Smith, and Peter Whitmer, Junior, each of them under thirty years of age at the time of the organization.

The Smiths and Cowdery were of old New England colonial families. The Smiths were descended from Robert Smith, who came from England and settled at Topsfield, Massachusetts, in 1638. These three brothers were of the sixth generation, inclusive, from Robert, and Cowdery was of the seventh generation from William Cowdery, of the family of Lord Cowdery of England, who settled near Lynn, Massachusetts, about the same time that Robert Smith came to America.

The Whitmers were from a German family, who settled in an early day near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and subsequently the father of these two brothers, Peter Whitmer, Senior, removed to New York. All of these families were of high respectability as far back as records trace them, and their records indicate their prominence in civil and military service.

The organization established by these six young men was peculiar in this, that they claimed more direct communication from God than the reformers had done, and, as a result of this inspiration, they provided for an organization after the ancient order, with apostles, seventies, prophets, evangelists, bishops, pastors, teachers, deacons, and other officers, some to look after the general interests of the church and some to attend to the local demands, but all to teach the gospel principles taught by ancient apostles and saints, *viz.*: faith, repentance, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, and all other principles growing out of or appertaining to these.

Among other divine revelations or manifestations which Joseph Smith claimed to receive were angelic visitations and manifestations commencing as early as 1820 when he was in his fifteenth year. Through these manifestations he was made acquainted with the fact that in a hill near the home of his father, a few miles south of Palmyra, New York, were hidden some gold plates upon which were engraven the historical and doctrinal records of the prehistoric nations of America. Finally he was permitted to remove these plates from their resting place in what was called the Hill Cumorah, where they had lain

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

since about 420 A. D. He was permitted to obtain possession of these plates, and by the power of God, as believed, he was enabled through the ancient instrument of the "Urim and Thummim," found with the plates, to translate the engravings into the English language, and publish them in 1829 in book form called the "Book of Mormon." After the translation and before the publication, three others bore testimony as follows:

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken; and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety, that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shewn unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true; and it is marvelous in our eyes, nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

"OLIVER COWDERY.

"DAVID WHITMER.

"MARTIN HARRIS."

In addition to this, Joseph Smith showed the plates to eight witnesses whose testimony with the testimony of the three was published with the first edition of the book and with every other edition since issued.

The Book of Mormon purports to give account of three distinct colonies, all coming to the Western Continent from the Orient, the first, in point of time, at the confounding of the languages at the

building of the Tower of Babel, another six hundred years B. C., and the third at the time Zedekiah, King of Judah, was carried captive into Babylon. A very fair idea of the claims of the Book of Mormon is obtained from the Introduction published in the book as follows:

“AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY THE HAND OF MORMON  
UPON PLATES TAKEN FROM THE PLATES OF NEPHI.

“Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites; written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation. Written and sealed up, and hid unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed; to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof; sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by the way of Gentile; the interpretation thereof by the gift of God.

“An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether; also, which is a record of the people of Jared; who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven: which is to shew unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. And now if there are faults, they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of Christ.”

The infant church increased rapidly until in two months after organization, it had increased five hundred *per cent.*, and at the first conference, in June, 1830, there were about thirty members. The increase continued with wonderful rapidity. In September following, a mission was undertaken to the far west, with the leading purpose of presenting the message to the American Indians, or, as called in the Book of Mormon, Lamanites, and of making them acquainted with the Book of Mormon, as the record of their fathers, but frequently presenting the message to others. The members of this commission were Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer, Junior.



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In the Western Reserve, Ohio, near Mentor, they called upon a former friend of Pratt's, a very popular minister of the Disciples Church, Sidney Rigdon. At this meeting there was presented to Mr. Rigdon, for the first time, a copy of the Book of Mormon, as the evidence abundantly shows. This shows the absolute absurdity of the report which afterwards gained current, that Sidney Rigdon assisted in getting up the Book of Mormon, using as a basis the stolen manuscript of Solomon Spalding. The Book had been in print over a year before he saw it, and before he ever met an adherent of this faith.

At Mentor, Kirtland Mills, and vicinity, were found several men who afterwards became prominent actors in the movement, among whom were Sidney Rigdon and Doctor Frederick G. Williams, who subsequently became counselors to the President of the Church, Joseph Smith, Orson Hyde, Luke S. Johnson, Lyman E. Johnson, John F. Boynton, and Lyman Wight, who subsequently became members of the quorum of Twelve Apostles, and Edward Partridge who became the first presiding bishop of the Church.

*Bancroft Library*

Joseph Smith and others soon followed these missionaries to Kirtland, Ohio, and it soon was recognized as the headquarters of the church. Here the organization took on a more perfect and permanent form. The first Presidency of three, the quorum of Twelve Apostles, the first quorum of Seventy, the high council, the presiding bishopric, and several other quorums, were formed, and a fine building known as the Kirtland Temple, which still stands, was erected.

In the fall of 1830 the four young missionaries who formed this nucleus, accompanied by Doctor Frederick G. Williams, moved on westward, and early in 1831, after much hardship incident to traveling on foot through the snows of a severe winter, arrived at Independence, Missouri, and in the vicinity of where Kansas City now stands, entered into their mission among the Indians. They were well received by the Delaware and other tribes, but through the opposition of missionaries of other faiths their work was interfered with. They returned to Independence and from thence sent Mr. Pratt of their number back to the church in the east to report progress. The remaining four continued at Independence until they were joined by several of the leading authorities of the church, thus forming another nucleus for church building.

Here a spot was dedicated for the future building of the Temple of Zion. Members of the church from the east soon began to gather

to this place in great numbers. These people coming mostly from the east, and being strongly in favor of free schools and opposed to human slavery, excited the enmity of the pioneer settlers who came mostly from the slave states, especially Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. This, added to the divergence in religious opinions, caused friction, bitterness, and violence. It is too long a story, and attended with too many complications to relate within the limits of this article, but it resulted in the lawless element arising, organizing, and violently driving the Saints from the County of Jackson, in the autumn of 1833 and the winter following. They took refuge in adjoining counties, principally in Clay.

This was too near their old enemies of Jackson who lost no opportunity to agitate the minds of the people of Clay until trouble arose. In 1836, as a means of bringing about better conditions, Honorable Alexander W. Doniphan, then a member of the Missouri Legislature, introduced a bill providing for the organization of Caldwell County. This bill was passed with but little opposition, with the tacit understanding that the church should occupy the county, buying out all the settlers who did not care to live among them, and should not settle in adjoining counties without the expressed consent of two-thirds of the residents of the township where they desired to settle.

The Saints faithfully carried out the stipulations of the agreement by buying out all who would sell in Caldwell County. They also established two settlements under the agreement of the two-thirds expressed consent provision, one in Daviess County which they called Adam-ondi-Ahman, and one at Dewitt in Carroll County.

In Caldwell, the town site of Far West was located, August 8, 1836, and made the county-seat. The town was almost exclusively owned by the members of the church and they were very prosperous, but religious and political prejudice continued, with persecution sometimes assuming the form of violence.

False and exaggerated reports were circulated which so influenced Governor L. W. Boggs that he issued an order to the militia to banish the Saints from the State or exterminate them. This so encouraged the lawless element that, on October 30, 1838, a mob made an assault on a settlement at Haun's Mill, a few miles east of Far West, and killed or mortally wounded seventeen persons, none of whom had ever borne arms against their assassins. On the same day the militia approached Far West and, under flag of truce, asked for an interview with Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, Sidney Rigdon, George W. Rob-



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inson, and Lyman Wight. This request was granted, but when these gentlemen entered the camp of the militia they were made prisoners. Then Hyrum Smith and Amasa Lyman were brought into camp and placed under guard with the other five. Though only one of these men, *vis.*: Colonel Wight, was in any way connected with the military, they were promptly court-martialed and sentenced to be shot, as the following order will show:

"BRIGADIER-GENERAL DONIPHAN; SIR: You will take Joseph Smith and the other prisoners into the public square of Far West, and shoot them at nine o'clock to-morrow morning.

"SAMUEL D. LUCAS,  
"Major-General Commanding."

To this General Doniphan with characteristic courage replied:

"It is cold-blooded murder. I will not obey your order. My Brigade shall march for Liberty to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock; and if you execute those men, I will hold you responsible before an earthly tribunal, so help me God.

"A. W. DONIPHAN, Brigadier-General."

During the winter following, the orders of Governor Boggs were cruelly executed, and the members of the church with much suffering and destitution were driven from the State, finding shelter in Illinois. The leaders were held as prisoners in Independence, Richmond, and Liberty, receiving several *ex parte* trials, until the following April, when they were permitted to escape and join their families and friends in Illinois.

The action of Doniphan so disconcerted Lucas and his associates that the sentence of death was not carried out. Subsequently a sentence of death was pronounced at Richmond, Missouri, but before executing sentence consultation was had with Lieutenant-Colonel Richard B. Mason, then in command at Fort Leavenworth, as to the legality of the procedure, who replied: "It would be nothing more nor nothing less than cold blooded murder." So further action was again abandoned. The detailed account of these perilous times would be very thrilling and interesting, but must not be undertaken within the space of this article.

They were hospitably received in Illinois, and a season of prosperity followed, resulting in building up the flourishing city of Nauvoo in Hancock County. The Missouri agitators, however, continued to harass them by kidnapping and harshly treating their victims, circu-

lating slanderous reports, making requisitions for arrests, etc., until violent persecution was again prevalent, resulting in the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage, Illinois, June 27, 1844. While at Nauvoo the church erected a magnificent Temple which presented an imposing appearance, but the interior was never finished.

Opposition from without and division within now brought to the church the most critical period of its existence. Enemies drove them from the fair city of Nauvoo, so that in two years the city was a waste place and its inhabitants were scattered to the four winds. Aspirants for leadership were many. The most formidable and the one gaining by far the most adherents was Brigham Young, who, with his associates, left Nauvoo in February, 1846, and finally conducted his adherents to Utah and founded the City of Great Salt Lake. In many points they departed from the original faith of the church. The most striking departure was perhaps the introduction of polygamy as a tenet of the church. This was first presented August 29, 1852, at a special conference held at Salt Lake City, Utah. In order to put the responsibility of this doctrine back on Joseph Smith this document bore date of July 12, 1843, over nine years before its first public presentation.

The genuineness and authenticity of this document was questioned by many leading ministers of the church, and the practice of polygamy denounced as immoral and corrupt.

Proof that Joseph Smith taught and practiced polygamy is alleged by the people in Utah has been demanded, but only implicated witnesses have been found to testify. The entire absence of issue by any other woman than his one wife, Emma Hale Smith, is conclusive rebuttal of their false testimony.

In the same year that polygamy was introduced in Utah, a movement was made to form a reorganization of the elements opposed to this and other innovations. This organization took more definite form in 1853. It was composed principally of men who were active participants in the church during the days of its first President, Joseph Smith, and included several local church organizations which had maintained their organic identity through all the time of trouble and doubt. This organization at once advocated that the rights of Presidency should be vested in the son of Joseph Smith, according to accepted revelations received through him. Elder Jason Briggs, who had been connected with the church during the administration of its first president, was chosen temporary president to represent the law-

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

ful heir. On April 6, 1860, Joseph Smith, son of the deceased president, presented himself to a conference of the church held at Amboy, Illinois, and was immediately chosen and ordained to occupy his father's place. The scattered elements and representatives of the several factions rallied to his support, until to-day only the organization with headquarters at Salt Lake City, Utah, remains to dispute the claims of the Reorganized Church.

Several times the claims of these two rival organizations have been tested in the Courts, the principal one being the famous Temple Case, where the Reorganized Church, for the purpose of quieting title, brought action against all parties having color of title. The case came before the Court of Common Pleas, Lake County, Ohio, in February, 1880. Honorable L. S. Sherman was the judge. The decision, in part, was as follows:

"That the said plaintiff, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is a religious society, founded and organized upon the same doctrines and tenets, and having the same church organization, as the original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, organized in 1830 by Joseph Smith, and was organized pursuant to the constitution, laws and usages of said original church, and has branches located in Illinois, Ohio, and other States.

"That the church in Utah, the defendant, of which John Taylor is president, has materially and largely departed from the faith, doctrines, laws, ordinances, and usages of said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and has incorporated into its system of faith the doctrines of celestial marriage and a plurality of wives, and the doctrine of Adam-god worship, contrary to the laws and constitution of said original church.

"And the Court do further find that the plaintiff, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is the true and lawful continuation of, and successor to the said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, organized in 1830, and is entitled in law to all its rights and property."

The people of Utah try to throw discredit upon the Reorganized Church by claiming that there was no disorganization and hence no demand for a reorganization, but the foregoing decree not only makes plain that the Utah contingency had departed from the original faith, but defines wherein. Though other tests have been made, no contrary opinion has been rendered.

Joseph Smith continued to preside until his death, December 10, 1914. In these fifty-four years he retained the universal love and con-



fidence of the people, and though he was annually sustained by vote of Conference, there was never a negative vote.

In 1842 Joseph Smith wrote an epitome of faith, which was published in the Chicago *Democrat* as follows:

"We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

"We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

"We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

"We believe that these ordinances are, 1st, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; 2d, Repentance; 3d, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; 4th, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

"We believe that a man must be called of God by 'prophecy, and by laying on of hands' by those who are in authority to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

"We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive church, *viz.*: Apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.

"We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.

"We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

"We believe all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

"We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes. That Zion will be built upon this continent. That Christ will reign personally upon the earth, and that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisaic glory.

"We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where or what they may.

"We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

"We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to *all men*; indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul, 'we believe all things, we hope all things', we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”

The Reorganized Church has reaffirmed the above without alteration, and because of recent issues added:

“We believe that Marriage is ordained of God; and that the law of God provides for but one companion in wedlock, for either man or woman, except in cases of death or where the contract of marriage is broken by transgression.

“We believe that the doctrines of plurality and a community of wives are heresies, and are opposed to the law of God. THE BOOK of MORMON says:—“Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be ONE WIFE, and concubines he shall have none, for I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me, saith the Lord of hosts.”—Jacob 2: 36, 37.

Since the death of President Joseph Smith, his son, Frederick M. Smith, has been installed as president. The quorums are in splendid organic form, and face the future with the confidence and good will of the people, which has been increased with each succeeding year under the presidency of Joseph Smith since 1860.

The legal headquarters of the church are at Lamoni, Iowa, where it maintains a large publishing house, issuing several periodicals, books and tracts. It is incorporated under the laws of Iowa. A still larger gathering, numerically, exists at Independence, Missouri, and a branch publishing house is maintained there. A college, two homes for the aged and a children's home are maintained at Lamoni; a sanitarium and two homes for the aged at Independence; and one home for the aged at Kirtland, Ohio.

The personnel of the General Officers of the Church at present is as follows: Frederick Madison Smith, President; Elbert A. Smith, his Counselor; Quorum of Twelve Apostles,—Gomer T. Griffiths, Peter Anderson, Francis M. Sheehy, Ulysses W. Greene, Cornelius A. Butterworth, John W. Rushton, James F. Curtis, Robert C. Russell, James E. Kelley, William M. Aylor, Paul M. Hansen, and James A. Gillen; Presidents of Seventy,—Thomas C. Kelley, James F. Mintun, Warren E. Peak, John A. Davies, Arthur B. Phillips, Elmer E. Long, and James T. Riley; Presiding Bishop,—Benjamin R. McGuire; James F. Kier, his Counselor; Richard S. Salyards, Secretary; Heman C. Smith, Historian; and Claude I. Carpenter, Recorder.

# The Democratic Ideals of Washington and Lincoln the Common Property of All the Americas

BY

DOCTOR JULIO PHILIPPI

Vice-Chairman of the Chilean Delegation at the Pan-American  
Scientific Congress



R. VICE-PRESIDENT, Mr. Secretary, Mr. President of the Second Pan-American Scientific Congress, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Six years ago the capital city of my country enjoyed the great honor of welcoming the distinguished guests of all the Republics of the continent who had assembled to celebrate the first Pan-American Scientific Congress. To-day we assemble for the second time, and this time we are the guests of the oldest and most powerful of the sister Republics.

The countries here represented cover a vast extent of territory, a New World—and rightly so called because of the relatively short period that has elapsed since it was discovered by the races of Europe, and because it has given to the world a new concept of the destiny of humanity, and of the forms of government which shall bring humanity to ever higher levels.

It is a fact, and a fact which does not mean a mere coincidence, and with reference to the significance of which I wish to call your attention, that all the States of the American Continent possess one and the same form of government. All of them are committed to those ideals which Lincoln expressed so admirably when he said, "A government of the people, for the people, and by the people." This noble and profound profession of faith by one of the greatest sons of America represents the aspiration of all the nations of this continent.

Diverse have been the paths which we have tread in advancing





THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE

Built in 1833 at Kirtland, Ohio, it is still used as a place of worship by the Re-organized Church of the Latter Day Saints.









THE SMITH ANCESTRAL HOME, IN TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS  
Built in 1690





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